



Consultations

a newsletter for the diplomatic and consular communities

Katrina ... Who Can Forget

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www.state.gov/ofm



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Thousands watched television in morbid fascination as Hurricane Katrina, quietly spawned in the Caribbean, intensified into a monster Category 5 storm with 175 MPH winds and one of the lowest barometric pressures on record. The massive storm, still had a Category 4 sustained winds of 143 MPH, and gusts to 165 MPH, when the eye wall slammed ashore near New Orleans on August 29, 2005. Fierce winds and near-record storm surge brutally battered coastal towns in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Eighty-five percent of New Orleans had catastrophic long-term flooding. Storm-weakened levees breached within hours.

Katrina rapidly evolved into one of the most devastating natural disasters in US history, forcing the relocation of hundreds of thousands of home-

less survivors from New Orleans and elsewhere along the Gulf Coast; the largest such internal migration since the Civil War.

Katrina also set the stage for the State Department's first-ever direct participation in domestic disaster relief operations.

Prior to Katrina's landfall, and during the chaotic week that followed, an estimated 250,000 storm evacuees from the Gulf Coast descended on Texas, overwhelming hotels and shelters alike, with another 100,000+ relocating to locations in other states. Because of its size and proximity, Houston absorbed the bulk of the initial surge of evacuees. The Space City became the focal point for all Katrina evacuee processing and relocation efforts, including sheltering over 27,000 homeless survivors with-

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E-gov Introduction Complete

For the staff in the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM), providing excellent service to the foreign diplomatic and consular community in matters relating to motor vehicles, tax, customs, property and travel, is nothing new. And, traditionally, these services have been initiated by the completion of paper forms by your embassy staff. Those paper forms were then manually entered into the Office of Foreign Missions' information system. (A system better known as TOMIS — a little easier to remember.) And, while the OFM Department of Motor Vehicles staff, under Jackie Robinson's leadership, has done a great job in meeting the on-going demand, a recent Presidential Management Agenda mandated that government services, as much as possible, be provided over the Web, thus reducing the mountains of paperwork submitted. This mandate provided the opportunity OFM had been waiting for, to initiate improvements that would allow the staff of not only DMV, but all service departments, to be more effective. In 2003, OFM Systems partnered with the Protocol, DMV, and Tax offices to find a better way to do business. A plan was developed to create Web-based procedures that would allow embassies to submit their various applications for services by e-mail — the *E-gov project* was born.

The initial step in the development of the project was to create electronic versions of the various OFM applications. Versions that embassy staffs could conveniently complete using any computer connected to the Internet. These applications needed of course to include basic intelligence and security features to ensure that the information entered was as accurate as possible.

The second step was to create a program, now called *Web TOMIS*, that would first, accept a mission's electronically submitted information for review by the OFM staff, and then would move the data to the standard TOMIS system for final processing, including the adjudication by Protocol of Notification of Appointment applications. (It should be noted here, that while not part of OFM, the Protocol group, under the leadership of Holly Coffey, has played an important collaborative role in the development of E-gov.) The resulting E-gov program promises immediate benefit for all — ease of use for the missions, and greatly reduced data entry chores for OFM processors.

This Phase I of E-gov, Pilot Mode, went live first to five missions in May 2005, and then was opened to all missions last July. Between June and October 2005, OFM Systems personnel not only provided training for OFM and Protocol Office users, but oversaw the training of representatives from 135 missions (123 Embassies and 12 International Organizations). Held at The Johns Hopkins University, Washington Center, the goal of the mission training sessions was to train two representatives from each mission and establish E-gov as the primary method of submitting their necessary applications for services.

The OFM Systems team, with the help of the OFM and Protocol teams, has now begun Phase II of the E-gov project. The goal of this second phase is two-fold. First, to create a Web version of the TOMIS system itself that can be accessed from the OpenNet Internet Browser on every OFM and Protocol computer. This ability will mean a more efficient and faster response time. And, second, to expand the number of E-gov applications available to include additional OFM services. Missions will want to watch for announcements of the new E-gov capabilities in the near future.

For additional information on these exciting developments or for information on training opportunities, please contact *Kelvin Moore* at 202 895-3556 or *Charles Irons* at 202 895-3529. ■

It's at training sessions similar to this one pictured below that mission representatives learn to use the new E-gov system.



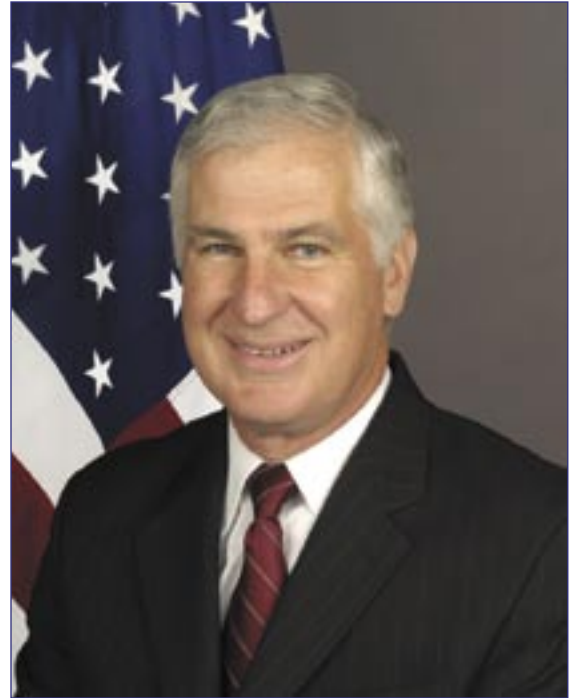
To the Diplomatic and Consular Communities: Greetings...

As Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, I have the honor of also serving as Director of the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM). Although I have been in my position only a few months, it has become clear to me that OFM is dedicated to its role of efficiently managing issues for the diplomatic and consular community in this country. I stand fully behind their efforts.

The interaction between OFM and the foreign diplomatic community is extensive, whether our staff members are providing services directly or helping a third party provide services to the diplomatic and consular communities. My goal is to enhance this interaction and to ensure that OFM provides the best possible service. Already OFM has begun several initiatives aimed at achieving this goal. These include the important task of streamlining communications between your communities and OFM, as well as a Web-based system for submitting and processing applications for OFM services.

As a further means of keeping you informed about issues that could affect your missions and personnel, we will continue to send you this publication and post relevant information on the OFM Web site (currently undergoing renovation). We want to hear from you as well. If you have comments, suggestions or perceptions, please send them via e-mail to *OFM Deputy Assistant Secretary John Gaddis* at OFMquestions@state.gov, or to *Clay Hays, Chief, Community Relations*, at Consultations@state.gov.

I am pleased to be a part of OFM team, and I look forward to helping OFM continue to succeed in its important work with the members of our prestigious foreign diplomatic community. ■



Ambassador Richard J. Griffin, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Director of the Office of Foreign Missions

Important to Know:

New policy diplomatic notes and notices are now available on the Internet at www.state.gov/ofm. Simply browse to the homepage and click on the button, "Circular Diplomatic Notes & Notices," found in the lefthand column. The most recently posted notes addressing areas of concern to the missions are to be found in *Administrative Procedures, Customs, Real Property and Tax Exemption*. These new or updated notes are indicated by this symbol, **, in the left hand margin of the consolidated list.

Also please note: The publication *Guidance for Administrative Officers* is undergoing revision and restructuring at present. It will be brought back on-line at the earliest possible moment. Please check www.state.gov/ofm periodically for the announcement of its availability. Should you have procedural questions in the meantime, please call or e-mail your servicing OFM office. We regret any inconvenience to users of the OFM site, www.state.gov/ofm.

Important to Know:

Mission staff may already be aware of a recent change in the hours of the District of Columbia's OFM Customer Service Department. However, as a reminder, before your next visit, please note that Customer Service is now open only during the following hours:

11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

By the beginning of March 2006, Customer Service hopes to return to open hours of 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Ultimately, we are working to offer for your convenience the extended hours of 9:00 to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for federal holidays. Watch for the announcement of these longer hours.

In the meantime, you may want to check the current hours of operation before making your visit to the Customer Service Department, Washington. We apologize for any inconvenience these temporarily shortened hours of operation may cause.

Update: Escort Screening Courtesies Program

The popular Escort Screening Courtesies Program has grown significantly since its inception in February 2004. Initiated by Former Secretary Colin Powell, this courtesy program was designed to provide State Department escort officers for senior foreign officials as a way to assist them in avoiding being subjected to the rigorous security measures implemented at U.S. airports in the wake of September 11, 2001. Now, new policies are being put in place and procedures are being updated with regard to airport screening courtesies for *senior officials of cabinet minister rank or above departing from U.S. airports for either domestic or international destinations*. The new program replaces the screening courtesies program outlined in the Department's circular diplomatic Note 03-69.

It is important to note that *these changes only address departures from airports*, and do not affect the existing program of "Expedited Port Courtesies" for arriving dignitaries, a program administered by the Office of Protocol.

September 2005 was the busiest month ever for the program, with a world conference for parliamentarians, the 60th United Nations General Assembly, and the fall meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank all occurring at various destinations. OFM staff has calculated that nearly 500 escort assignments took place that month, bringing the total for the first nine months of 2005 to 1,922. In comparison, there were just 1,686 assignments for all of 2004.

In order to meet this high demand for escort courtesies, escort officers or diplomatic security agents are now available at most major airports in the United States. However, while the staff that processes the requests submitted by missions has effectively dealt with this large increase in volume, the need for participants to adhere to program guidelines has become crucial to ensuring the best service for their dignitaries. Therefore, OFM would like to remind the diplomatic community to consult circular note #04-159.

The program now provides a Department of State escort officer for eligible senior officials, accompanying spouses, and their children under the age of twelve, who are *not* already being escorted by a United States Secret Service or Diplomatic Security Service Protective Detail. The presence of an escort officer confers the same screening courtesies and exemptions currently received by senior officials under armed escort. If the senior official is traveling with an entourage,

members of the entourage below the level of cabinet minister will be subject to a customary screening that will be expedited whenever possible.

The major points listed below may help in reviewing the program's current policies and procedures:

- The program is only for cabinet-level officials (comparable to the U.S. Presidential cabinet) and above.
- Request forms must be complete including the date of birth and passport number for the dignitary, and an after-hours point of contact. It is also helpful for our staff if the dignitary's surname is capitalized.
- Requests should be *e-mailed* at least three business days before the first flight from a U.S. airport to allow adequate time for processing (which includes identifying an available escort officer). While OFM tries to accommodate requests submitted less than three business days in advance, requests submitted

late during times of peak demand are unlikely to be approved. (The accompanying graph on the next page shows the fluctuation.)

- If the dignitary is traveling with his or her spouse, or children under the age of 12, please submit separate requests for each eligible family member.

- If the dignitary is traveling with armed security, please do *not*

submit a request for escort screening courtesies; instead, contact Diplomatic Security's Protective Liaison office at 202-895-3600. Also, please do not submit a request for a head of state traveling under Secret Service protection, as the Secret Service will provide the escort officer.

- Finally, do not confuse OFM's Escort Screening Courtesies Program with the Office of Protocol's Expedited Port Courtesies program. OFM's program does not provide any services upon a dignitary's arrival. Also, submission of a request for Expedited Port Courtesies does not eliminate the need to submit a separate request for Escort Screening Courtesies for eligible dignitaries (eligibility is more limited in this program than for Expedited Port Courtesies).

If you need further information regarding this program, please feel free to contact OFM staff at 202-647-4554. Requests forms and an electronic copy of circular note #04-159 are available at www.state.gov/ofm. ■



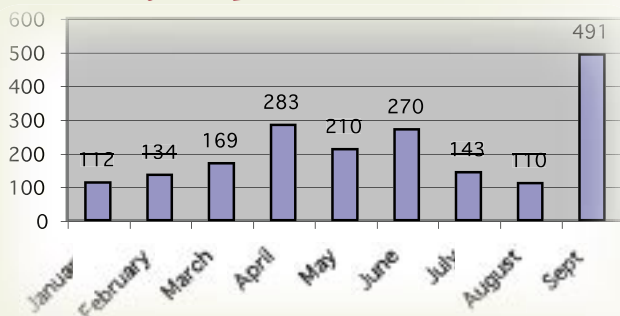
Q & A

Frequently Asked Questions

Escort Screening

- Q:** Where can I find a copy of the blank form?
- A:** The "Request for Escort Screening Courtesies" form can be downloaded from OFM's web site: www.state.gov/ofm. At the home page, click on "Escort Screening Courtesies." Four links will be displayed at the right; the last is for the request template.
- Q:** After I fill in the form, how do I submit it?
- A:** The form should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail addressed to escortscreening@State.gov. Please do *not* send the completed form as a PDF attachment. We are not able to process PDFs.
- Q:** What if we have temporarily lost our ability to send e-mail?
- A:** Please call the program staff at 202-647-4554 to find out if there is sufficient time to wait until your e-mail capability is restored, or if it will be necessary to send the request by fax. Please note that, except in emergencies, faxed copies are not accepted.
- Q:** When should I expect to hear after I've sent in my request?
- A:** Ordinarily, requests are not processed until a few days before the first flight from a U.S. airport. If you submit a request more than three business days before the first flight and receive no response by the second business day before the flight, please call the program staff at 202-647-4554 to ensure the request was received.
- Q:** What if the mission does not yet know if our minister will be traveling with armed security? Should we send you a request anyway just to be sure?
- A:** Yes, but please indicate in the e-mail to which you attach the request form that it is possible the minister will travel with armed security. The staff will then know to check with you, and with other offices that might be affected, closer to the first departure.

Monthly Requests Honored in 2005



Regional News

Protocol Changes

The U.S. State Department's Office of Protocol, Diplomatic Affairs, has moved to join OFM at International Place in northwest Washington. Their new second floor location now provides a more pleasant and productive work space in which to serve their clients.

The Division is responsible for all activities associated with the accreditation of ambassadors and other diplomatic and consular officers; overseeing determinations of eligibility for various benefits that include privileges, immunities and issuance of the appropriate credentials; and, in coordination with OFM, to deal with problems arising between Foreign diplomatic missions, other Federal agencies, and state and local authorities on matters of common concern.



Fekitamoeloa Utoikamanu, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Tonga, shown with her daughter and Chief of Protocol Donald B. Ensenat, presents her credentials to President Bush in the Oval Office, May 26, 2005.

OFM as Resource

The Chicago Office of Foreign Missions held three administrative training seminars for the Chicago Consular Corps. Fifty-five consular staff and officers from 46 countries were in attendance as *OFM Deputy Regional Director Dorothy Delahanty*, and *Foreign Affairs Program Specialists Sharon Powers* and *Brian Norris*, presented OFM programs placing special emphasis on personnel accreditation process and procedures, motor vehicle, and tax programs.



OFM Chicago's Program Specialist Brian Norris introduces consular corp members to OFM policies and procedures.

Response To Rita

In late September, *OFM Los Angeles' Deputy Regional Director Jeff Seely* joined a team of other U.S. Department of State officials in Austin, Texas, establishing Task Force Rita and led by the Department's Diplomat-in-Residence at the University of Texas, Austin. Their mission, as it was during the much more destructive Hurricane Katrina, was to integrate the Department's efforts with other local, state and federal agencies and to keep the Department on top of the needs on the ground, especially those of foreign nationals and consulates.

The assignment also created an opportunity for LA's Deputy Director to relieve Houston staff so that they could return with their families after evacuating the city, during which time he met many members of Houston's Consular Corps. The exchange was of benefit to both Regional Offices.



OFM Deputy Regional Director Jeff Seely (third from the left) and other members of the Hurricane Rita Task Force at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas

New Faces ...

From Los Angeles

Alex Kirkpatrick
Regional Director



Alex Kirkpatrick is a career diplomat with almost 30 years of service. He has been assigned to U.S. Missions in Israel, Saudi Arabia, Madagascar, Barbados, Mexico, Ethiopia and Nigeria, as well as extensive official travel to other countries. In the States, he has served as Special Assistant to an Assistant Secretary, been responsible for East Asian and Pacific issues in Legislative Affairs, and directed the United States' Diplomatic Pouch and Mail service.

From New York

Donna Winton
Regional Director



Donna Winton joined OFM as the new Regional Director in New York in October 2005. Her most recent assignment was in Amman, Jordan, where she served as Cultural Attache from 2002-2005. Ms. Winton began her career as a Foreign Service Officer in 1986, serving in Washington and in six overseas posts. She holds Master's Degree in International Relations, with a specialization in Middle East Studies from San Francisco State University.

From Miami

Dan Cushman
Regional Director



After earning his MS from the University of Florida in 1971, Dan Cushman, new Regional Director of OFM Miami, spent 15 years teaching in the public schools of Florida, Georgia and Virginia. Dan joined the Foreign Service in 1988, and has served in management positions at our embassies in France, Haiti, Lebanon, Cyprus, Turkey, and Italy. He has also served domestically in the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Neyra Ceballos
Student Intern



Miami student intern Neyra Ceballos will have graduated Florida International University; this December with an undergraduate degree in International Relations and a minor in sociology and anthropology. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in International Studies with the goal a career in the Department of State.

From San Francisco

Steven Candy
Deputy Regional Director



OFM's new San Francisco Deputy Regional Director Steven Candy has been a Foreign Service Officer for 24 years, most recently serving as Deputy Political Counselor at the U.S. Embassy to Belgium. His other overseas assignments were as Treaty Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy Panama, and as a Political Officer in Sweden and Mexico. At State Department, he has served as Deputy Officer Director for Canadian Affairs, BENELUX Desk Officer and UN Political Affairs Officer. From 1993-95, he was seconded to the mayor's office in Chicago, Illinois, working closely with OFM's Chicago Regional Office.

From Chicago

Brian Norris
Program Specialist



Brian Norris joined the Chicago Regional Office last year as a Foreign Missions Program Specialist after completing his Bachelor's Degree from DeVry University. Mr. Norris administers the Diplomatic Motor Vehicle Program and assists with the Tax Exemption and Customs programs. Prior to joining OFM, he was on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1997-2001. He is originally from Maryland.

Joseph Blewitt
Student Intern



Joseph Blewitt joined the staff of OFM Chicago as a Foreign Missions clerk in September. He is currently pursuing a BS in Political Science at DePaul University. A native Chicagoan, his previous government work included Judge of Elections for the City of Chicago.

Vanessa Due
Student Intern



Joining the staff of OFM Chicago as an intern is Vanessa Due. Vanessa is currently pursuing a BS in Human Resources Management at Loyola University Chicago. Vanessa graduates in May, 2006, and plans to continue her academic career working for a graduate degree in criminal justice.

in the Astrodome. Berthing, feeding and cataloging the steady flux of storm survivors arriving at the huge Reliant Center Complex (the Astrodome complex), and later transferring them to longer-term shelters, became the number one priority.

Unexpectedly, Katrina's landfall also catapulted *Houston's Office of Foreign Missions* and *Regional Director Doug Dobson* into the limelight of disaster relief activities.

Initially, overwhelmed by the huge scope of the disaster, the local foreign consular community leaned heavily on OFM Houston for support, for assistance in locating missing countrymen, for disaster condition updates, for regional shelter contact information, and for general information on FEMA and Red Cross disaster assistance programs. The small, but energized local OFM staff met the challenges with professional competence, coordinating all major disaster related issues and operations for the diplomatic community with a myriad of non-government organizations as well as local, state and federal agencies.

OFM Houston kept consular officers abreast of changes by e-mailing detailed situation updates, providing early morning briefings in the Astrodome, and through an incessant series of calls and meetings well into the evening hours. The long 15-hour days during the crisis produced satisfyingly tangible results, grateful clients, and a well-deserved sense of contribution and work well done for the staff.

As soon as initial security issues were resolved in New Orleans, OFM facilitated entry approval into the ravaged areas for dozens of foreign consular officers, including consular assessment teams from the UK, Spain, Mexico, Japan, Brazil, Australia Honduras, and elsewhere. DSS physical security surveys were scheduled for New Orleans' nine career consulates, and although minor damage occurred, all were basically intact. In the confusion of the initial days, OFM Houston also helped coordinate with the Spanish Embassy, the National Guard and DSS for the successful evacuation of a Spanish Parliamentarian, and her family, from the Super Dome.

The day OFM was able to organize an escorted trip into downtown New Orleans for representatives from eight of the nine career consulates was a bright point. With Diplomatic Security accompanying the 11 car caravan, consular officers were able to retrieve consular seals and sensitive documents from their consulates. Afterwards, they touched base with other Katrina victims while lunching at a National Guard field kitchen outside the World Trade Center.

With the world's attention focused on the Gulf Coast, the U.S. State Department, Washington, was inundated by frantic phone calls seeking disaster updates and contact information on missing foreign citizens. Even more noteworthy was the unprecedented wave of disaster assistance offers received from foreign governments throughout the world. In response, Secretary of State Rice ordered the formation of ***Katrina Task Force 1*** on September 2, under the leadership of *Ambassador Eileen Malley*.

Ambassador Malley was tasked with providing the international community with a central point-of-contact clearinghouse for welfare and whereabouts queries for missing foreign nationals, and to coordinate all offers of international disaster assistance. OFM employees became essential in helping ensure that diplomats from all foreign embassies and consulates within the U.S. were assisted with their Katrina related issues, principally locating thousands of missing and displaced foreign citizens.

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The Weather Bureau map above shows the intensity of Hurricane Katrina as it approaches the Gulf Coast.



(Right) Thousands of Katrina Evacuees crowded into the Houston Astrodome for temporary shelter after leaving New Orleans.



Below, as in so many other photos, destruction and flooding mark the path of Katrina.



Pictured above are Baton Rouge's State South staff members including OFM and USAID personnel.

Katrina, continued from page 7

As Task Force 1 quickly evolved into a major 24/7 international coordination effort, the State Department determined that Katrina's widespread foreign impact, coupled with the receipt of more than \$2 billion in pledged offers of foreign disaster assistance, warranted the Department's first-ever direct participation in a domestic natural disaster relief operation.

On September 6 *Ambassador Joe Sullivan* (a Hurricane Katrina survivor himself as the displaced Diplomat-in-Residence from New Orleans' Tulane University) opened a new chapter in State Department's history. He headed the first satellite command center, *State South, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana*, with a mandate to facilitate all post-Katrina interactions with the international diplomatic community within the Gulf Coast disaster zone.

State South's priority included coordination of all foreign disaster relief efforts with USAID, FEMA, DHS and foreign press; acting as Spokespersons for the U.S. State Department; assisting in locating displaced foreign evacuees; the localization, removal and identification of deceased foreign citizens; the facilitation of foreign VIP access into storm damaged areas along the Gulf Coast, especially dislocated personnel from the career foreign consulates in New Orleans.

Staff interacted with displaced consular officers to assist them in reorganizing temporary consulate office sites in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Hammond and elsewhere, briefing DHS, USAID, FEMA and Louisiana officials, fielding dozens of calls from foreign storm victims and conducting multiple daily meetings with foreign delegations. But the most demanding activity by far was interacting with foreign consular officers, coroner officials, ICE representatives, the Red Cross, Task Force 1 and State South's two Consular Affairs (CA) Officers to locate and catalog displaced or missing foreign citizens.

The presence of the *Consular Affairs* officers *Chris Lamora* and *Steve Sena*, proved vital. It is because of their expertise that the number of presumed foreign dead was quickly reduced from several thousand to several hundred and then to less than thirty. In foreign mortality cases, detailed personal and geographic information had to be gathered to assist in locating and recovering the bodies, and to permit identification by field coroners at the morgue facility near Baton Rouge.

Even after recovery, the identification process was complex. Many of the confirmed foreign dead have been dual nationals with US citizenship. There are still four foreign death cases being actively monitored

The small, elite staff had hit the ground running, and for the next month coordinated events and resolved issues until all of the unit's essential goals were achieved. *Deputy Regional Director Bob Hopkins* of the Houston Regional Office, that also serves Louisiana, remained assigned to State South until he closed the office on October 7.

The multi-faceted effort here was remarkable, especially considering additional setbacks caused by Hurricane Rita just three weeks after Katrina. Even FEMA's sunrise planning meetings and office hours lasting into the night had failed to dampen the high morale and esprit-de-corps of the State South team. Their days were exciting, the pace intense and the results professionally gratifying.

If it is possible to find positives in the devastation and hardships of Katrina, then the staff of OFM Houston is grateful for the unique opportunity to forge not only invaluable professional, but lasting personal relationships with the members of the foreign Consular Corps they encountered, and they hope that their participation offered some solace to the victims. ■



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